

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 401

Introduced by Assembly Member Dodd

February 19, 2015

An act to add Section 12092 to the Government Code, relating to low-income water assistance.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 401, as introduced, Dodd. Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including water corporations, as defined. Existing law authorizes the commission to fix the rates and charges for every public utility, and requires that those rates and charges be just and reasonable. Existing law requires the Public Utilities Commission to consider, and authorizes the commission to implement, programs to provide rate relief for low-income ratepayers of a water corporation.

Existing law establishes the Department of Community Services and Development in state government and vests with the department various powers and authority regarding the implementation and administration of programs to assist low-income individuals in the state.

This bill would require the department, no later than January 1, 2017, in collaboration with the State Board of Equalization and relevant stakeholders, to develop a plan for the funding and implementation of the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program, which would include specified elements. The bill would require the department, no later than January 1, 2017, to report to the Legislature on its findings regarding the feasibility and desired structure of the program, including any recommendations for legislative action that may need to be taken.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. Section 12092 is added to the Government Code,
2 to read:
3 12092. (a) This section shall be known, and may be cited, as
4 the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Act.
5 (b) No later than January 1, 2017, the department, in
6 collaboration with the board and relevant stakeholders, shall
7 develop a plan for the funding and implementation of the
8 Low-Income Water Rate Assistance Program, which shall include
9 all of the following elements:
10 (1) A description of the method for collecting moneys to support
11 and implement the program.
12 (2) A description of the mechanism for providing funding
13 assistance under the program through either direct credits to
14 enrollees in the program or reimbursements to water service
15 providers.
16 (3) A description of the method to be used to determine the
17 amount of moneys that may need to be collected from water
18 ratepayers to fund the program. This section does not authorize
19 the imposition of a state charge to fund the program.
20 (c) No later than January 1, 2017, the department shall report
21 to the Legislature on its findings regarding the feasibility and
22 desired structure of the program, including any recommendations
23 for legislative action that may need to be taken.
24 (d) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the
25 following meanings:
26 (1) “Board” means the State Board of Equalization.
27 (2) “Department” means the Department of Community Services
28 and Development.
29 (3) “Low-income” means a household with income that is equal
30 to or no greater than 200 percent of the federal poverty guideline
31 level. For one-person households, program eligibility shall be
32 based on two-person household guideline levels.

- 1 (4) “Program” means the Low-Income Water Rate Assistance
- 2 Program.

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